CURRENT TOPICS

SEVERAL DAYS ago President Roosevelt caused to be sent to Senator Hale, of Maine, a statement of the activities of the secret service. This was in response to a request made by the senate. Soon after the president's communication was received by Mr. Hale it was rumored that that communication contained a reflection on a senator of a southern state. On January 7 a Washington correspondent for the Associated Press gave it out that the president's communication to Mr. Hale showed that Mr. Rcosevelt had ordered secret service men to "shadow" Senator Tillman on the theory that he possibly was interested in an "Oregon land grab." It is claimed that the president's "tracking" of Senator Tillman followed an attack made by the senator nearly a year ago on an Oregon land company which had used Mr. Tillman's name as one of the persons interested in the concern. In the same dispatch the Associated Press quoted Senator Tillman as saying that there can be no development which he would desire to have withheld from the public.

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ON JANUARY 8 President Roosevelt's letter to Senator Hale was made public. In that letter the president names Senator Tillman of South Carolina as one member whom, in the president's opinion, it was necessary to "shadow." In this letter the president charges that Senator Tillman sought to secure nine quarters of certain Oregon land, seven of these quarters being intended for members of the senator's family, one for his private secretary and one for his agent, William E. Lee. The president presents copies of letters which he says were written by Senator Tillman and others by the senator's agent, Lee. The inference in the president's letter to Senator Hale is that Senator Tillman worked for the destruction of a grant held by railroads on this Oregon land in order that he might secure nine quarter sections of that land for members of his family. This would mean that Senator Tillman would jeopardize his good name for 1,440 acres of Oregon land. The president also charges that Mr. Tillman used frank envelopes in which to carry on this correspondence with the land agents.

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SOON AFTER the delivery of the president's message relating to the Tennessee Coal and Iron company in which the president admitted that he consented to the absorption of that company by the steel trust, Senator Culberson, of Texas, introduced a resolution instructing the judiciary committee to report to the senate whether, in its opinion, the president was authorized to permit that absorption. Senator Culberson said: "The president's position in denying that congress had authority to direct a head of a department by a resolution of inquiry is characteristic of the distinguished occupant of the White House, and it is a corollary of the main dogma that he is absolved from any legal restraint whatever." Mr. Culberson cited legal authorities to prove that congress is empowered to place restrictions on heads of executive departments to direct their acts. He read a statement in which the attorney general was quoted after the absorption of the Tennessee Coal and Iron company by the United States Steel corporation by the statement that he would proceed in the courts against the steel corporation if the steel corporation should violate the law in the respect of restraint of trade. The senate adopted the resolution.

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IN THE HOUSE on January 8, the special committee reported with the recommendation that the president be rebuked by tabling so much of his message as reflected on members of congress in connection with his recommendation regarding the secret service detectives and also declaring it to be the sense of the house that it would decline to consider any communications from any source which is not, in its own judgment, respectful. Perkins, of New York, Tawney of Minnesota, Shirley of Kentucky, Fitzgerald of New York, and other representatives delivered speeches in which they denounced the president's attack upon the integrity of the house. The resolution to table the president's message was adopted with 212 yeas to 35 nays.

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ADVERTISING church services has been tried, spasmodically, to be sure, but for some cause or other there seems to be a sentiment against it. Just why this should be so is not apparent. If advertising will attract crowds to the theatres and to the stores, why not use the same means to attract people to the church? In these days of business competition and stress the business man who fails to advertise is not usually a business man for long. And certainly the church should be conducted on business lines. Wherever the experiment of church advertising has been tried it has proved successful. One of the latest examples is from Barre, Vermont, where Rev. Francis A. Poole is pastor of the First Congregational church. Rev. Mr. Poole is a firm believer in newspaper advertising and used it to good effect. When he took charge of the church three years ago, it was a moribund organization. Mr. Poole started with advertisements in the Sunday morning papers—big ones, a page, when he had the money, and three or four columns at other times. He took big, black type and told the people what was going on in the church, what the sermon would be about and who would be there. "As a result, says Mr. Poole, "the congregation has quadrupled in three years and at a meeting of trustees we decided to enlarge the church building to twice its present size." Some pastors and elders who are wondering why more men do not attend church might have their wonder set at rest by a judicious investment in printer's ink.

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PROFESSOR William Hallock, the dean of the faculty of pure science, Columbia University, has written for the New York Times an article seeking to show the meaning from the scientific point of view of the great earthquakes of recent years. Professor Hallock says: "While the disaster in the south of Italy, from a human standpoint, is appalling, probably the most awful catastrophe in man's history of man, it can not be regarded as so important an indication of the earth's scientific vagaries as the quake in San Francisco. The disturbance on the Pacific coast extended for an area of over 200 miles, while the actual place of disturbance in Italy was very much smaller. Of course, to the minds of the superstitious and the scientifically disinterested, there is in an earthquake an extraordinary element of unknown horror, of an impending disaster that lies under our feet, over which we have no control, no forecast, and no means of protection. It comes suddenly and in a few seconds, perhaps, destroys hundreds of thousands of human beings. The actual mystery of the earthquake is only partly explained in scientific research, that by deductive theories only manages to pacify our awe of the unknown. There are things we know about the interior of the earth, and many things we don't know but would like to. We are ourselves merely on the crust of the earth, which scientists have variously estimated to be from ten miles to fifty miles below us. From the inner edge of this crust to the center there are, presumably, gaseous matter substances of excessive heat. The temperature of the center of the earth, which has been sensationally declared to be 'inconceivable' by Flammarion and others, is probably not so at all. Calculating a conception of these inner temperatures of the earth by the increasing heat that miners find as they descend deeper and deeper into it, it may be assumed that the probable temperature of the earth is about equal to that of an arc light or an electric furnace, which is about 5,000 to 6,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The idea that liquid gaseous material in the center of the earth resembles a vast volume of air, in a toy balloon, for instance, is not scientifically accepted. The entire earth is pressure rigid. It is subject to differences of load caused by the shifting of that load. It is the incessant readjustment of balances in the integral rigidity of the earth sphere that causes earthquakes. Imagine the tons upon tons that are carried from the mountains to the sea by the rivers! The Mississippi river alone probably bears continuously millions of tons from the mountains to the ocean. Necessarily a pressure taken from one place and increased in another too suddenly causes a cave-in or releases a pressure from below, which makes the upheavals we call earthquakes. It is an accepted theory in the scientific examination of the earth's substance that it is as nearly pressure solid as it can be, but not wholly so, a conclusion that leads us to believe that the adjustment of pressures is becoming steadier as the years progress. The displacements shown by the cracks in the San Francisco earthquake were only a few feet. Geological observation of prehistoric earthquakes shows that the earth made fissures and slides of 20,000 feet. Take the evidence in geological survey of Mount Shasta, in California, and the probable South American catastrophes of prehistoric time."

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ADMITTING THAT there is no actual scientific assurance of the breadth and immensity of these gigantic upheavals and that on the matter of earthquakes we are still "in a state of theoretical conclusion," Professor Hallock adds: "Actually our knowledge is comparatively limited; there is no possible forecast of earthquakes. The seismograph merely registers a disturbance when it is occurring. Of course, the human comprehension of earthquake phenomena is as primitive and terrifying as thunder and lightning was once a fearful demonstration to primitive races. People continue to live on the sides of volcanoes, in the valleys of eruptive zones, with naive indifference to the danger about them. They learn no lesson in these disasters. The region in which this recent earthquake disaster occurred, although well known to be in the earthquake zone, had apparently quieted down. I do not believe there is any relationship between sun spots and earthquakes; the elements and celestial influences are not concerned in the inner activities of the earth. The temperature of heat in the center earth which was directly involved in the recent earthquake in Sicily was not higher, than that of the temperature of an arc light, which is by no means inconceivable. The surrounding pressures immediately controlling the heated liquids of its center keep that liquid substance more or less hard, which constitutes our belief that the earth is pressure rigid. There is no doubt that earthquakes are diminishing. This is easily shown by comparing the history of the world's earthquakes as we know them according to the rapidity of geological changes. We associate earthquakes with eruptive neighborhoods. If the recent upheavals of the earth had taken place in the South Sea Islands the world would not have been so shocked. Of course, the appalling loss of life in the city of Messina was due to the fact that the houses were built of stucco and stone. In San Francisco the greater part of the city houses were frame buildings of redwood. Another cause of destruction was the tidal wave. It takes a comparatively small upheaval of the bottom of the ocean to make a huge and destructive tidal wave. An upheaval that would make a hole in the sea bottom of forty or fifty feet would be enough to produce a tidal wave twenty or thirty feet high."

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TREASURY department officials are just now participating in a tempest in a teapot if the not always reliable New York World is not in this instance mistaken. A Washington dispatch printed in the World says: "Assistant Secretary Reynolds, of the treasury department, is working a force of clerks in his office to a frazzle because he asked them a few days ago how much he should pay President Roosevelt for his services during the first four days in March. He himself has used up all his paper and pencils and is uncertain as to whether he should give up the sum of $537,63 11-31, $537.64 2-3 or make it an even $537.65 and run the chance of having the auditor for the state and other departments call him down for overpaying the president. Reynolds remembers that during the last term of President Cleve-